A

TREATISE

ON

HOME MISSIONS

IN THE

Evangelical Lutheran Church

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

BY ONE OF HER MINISTERS.

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PREFACE.

The writer of the subjoined essay on Home Missions, in presenting it to the church, would remark, that it was originally intended for the pages of the Evangelical Review, or our Church papers; but, by the advice of brethren, both in the ministry and among the laity—who read it in manuscript, and to whose judgment we respectfully defer, it is embodied in its present form—with a view, not alone of securing greater connection and permanency, but also of reaching more generally the membership of the church.

It is most respectfully submitted to the communion of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, hoping that it may, in some humble degree, awaken a deeper interest on this important subject, and contribute to the extension of our beloved Zion, and the Glory of God.

Asking from the reader an impartial consideration, I commit these thoughts to the care of Him who rules over all; and to *His people*.

H. B.

Emmitsburg, Aug. 1859.

HOME MISSIONS.

THE subject of Home or Inner Missions is doubtless one of more importance to the future prosperity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, than all others. Hence, a few reflections in relation to it, with a view of awakening a deeper and more abiding interest in its future prosperity, will, we humbly trust, not be in vain; especially at a time when it is so greatly needed.

With this view, we commend these reflections to the prayerful attention of the membership of the church, humbly invoking the Divine Benediction to accompany their perusal.

This world is a vast laboratory, in which time and Providence are daily developing new phenomena of truth, and it becomes us seriously, as a church, to consider, and practically to apply, each new development. Did God's Providence and command indicate to the church, in former times, and clearly teach her, to "Go forward" in this good work of spreading the Redeemer's Kingdom: then should it incite us, at the present day, who have an equally clear revelation, and indication of his will, to "Go and do likewise."

When religion walks abroad in golden slippers, it is comparatively easy to follow in her footsteps. At a time when men are generally lauding a particular cause, or object, it is no great sacrifice, or trial of faith, to adopt it. We are best tested in our love of religion, and of the benevolent Institutions of the church, not when the genial sun of prosperity shines brightly upon them, but when opposition frowns, when difficulties stare us full in the face. Then is the time for firmness. Should we, at such an hour, ignobly shrink back? Would it be soldier like? Verily, no! We should be firm as

a rock of adamant, unshaken as the everlasting hills, whilst we hear the command as given by the Lord, in all its original authority, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

We argue the duty of the church to engage actively in the work of Home Missions.

I. By a consideration of the field, or land which God has set before us, and which is to be possessed. The land which God, in his providence, has set before the Lutheran Church, is this goodly land of North America, and principally the United States. This, the christian church, of which we constitute a part, is to possess, through the instrumentality of the gospel. Whilst it is true, that God is in no wise dependent upon the church for the extension of His cause and kingdom; and whilst all power is His in heaven and upon earth, He could have so arranged His Divine plan of enlightening and saving the world, that lieth in sin, as not to have needed their co-operation. But He has seen fit wisely to ordain, that by human agency, in the use of the means, His gospel should be extended and mankind be saved. Therefore, "we are laborers together with Him" in this moral vineyard. He has made the evangelization of the world to correspond in exact ratio with the means which his people put forth, in order to effect it. And He will not evangelize the world faster than his church comes up to the work, "to the work of the Lord against the mighty."

It requires but little attention to the facts as they exist, to show that no other portion of the earth, of equal size, is destined to exert so important and powerful an influence upon the religious character of the world as the United States. The providence of God, so manifestly visible in the settlement and subsequent history of this country, seems to point unmistakably to some great purpose to be fulfilled by this nation; and every step in the development of its gigantic physical and moral resources, goes to deepen the impression that God is working out some mighty problem by means of this country and people. Look for a moment at its vast la-

titude. It extends from Maine to California; from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It embraces an area of more than 2,983,153 square miles; or according to others, 3,306,865 square miles.

The future importance of this land, in its influence upon the world, will appear, when we consider its probable future population. At present, its population amounts to nearly twenty-six millions. That it is capable of sustaining a vast population will be seen on comparing it with the densely peopled countries of the Old World.

The territorial extent of this Republic is equal to that of the whole of Europe, without Russia, and that contains one hundred and sixty-nine millions of inhabitants. It is nearly ten times as large as Great Britain and France combined. It is twice as large as Hindostan, which has a population of one hundred and forty millions, which, at the same ratio, would give this land two hundred and eighty millions. It is twice as large as China Proper, which has one hundred and sixty-five millions, which is at the rate of three hundred and thirty millions in this land. It is sixteen times as large as England, which has twenty-four millions; the same rate would give the United States three hundred and eighty-four millions. It is fifty times as large as Naples, which has seven and a half millions, this would give us three hundred and seventy-five millions. It is one hundred times as large as Switzerland, which contains two millions, so that the same population to the square mile, which is sustained in this mountainous region, we shall have two hundred millions. It is one sixth less only than the area covered by the fifty-nine or sixty Empires, States and Republics of Europe. Of equal extent with the Roman Empire, or that of Alexander the Great, neither of which is said to have exceeded three millions of square miles.

The soil of these United States, is, on an average, much more productive than that of the countries we have alluded to. It is rich and fertile, and there is a much greater variety of production for the sustenance of man, than in most of

them. Her internal and external resources are almost unbounded. Rich in stores of mineral and agricultural wealth —abounding in artistic skill and mechanical ingenuity. Is not our's a country whose "merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth?" Do not our sails whiten every sea, and our commerce bring the productions of the four quarters of the earth to add to our own? Is it not, therefore, a fair conclusion, that this country is capable of sustaining a much more dense population than of those countries to which we have alluded? This would be more peculiarly so if religion should generally prevail, and diffuse its leaven among the unregenerate mass; so that the industry, the good and sober habits of the people would lead them to improve and develop properly the resources of the country. Is it not just to conclude that a much greater population could be sustained, than where ignorance, vice and heathenism prevail, and east their blight to impoverish and waste their resources?

Here a question may arise: Is it probable that this land will contain in the future such a vast population of human beings as we have supposed? We reply: It is altogether possible and probable. Since 1790 the population of this country has doubled once in about twenty-two and a half years; and there is no just reason to suppose that, for many years to come, the population will increase with less rapidity than it now does. Everything in the circumstances of the country is favorable to a rapid increase of the native population; and for a long time to come, it will hold out inducements to the emigrant from foreign lands to make this his home. At this rate, we would have, in 1865, six years hence, thirty-four millions; eleven years hence, in 1870, fifty-one millions; twenty-two years hence, in 1881, one hundred and two millions; forty-five years hence, in 1904, four hundred and eighty millions, and in ninety years hence, six billions, five hundred and twenty-eight millions. Thus, at a less rate of increase than has marked our history since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, we may live to see

thirty-four millions of dwellers in this goodly land. Our children may see four hundred and eight millions, and our children's children may see *billions*. While in the short period of a century and a half, our country may contain more inhabitants than the present population of our globe.

This may seem incredible to some, because the world has been so long peopled, and has only arrived at its present population. But we have only to consider that the Old World is now in its dotage, and in most parts of the heathen world the population is on the decline. This might be attributed to various causes, all tending to produce this result. (p. 13).

The perpetual wars in which they have been engaged, the dreadful pestilences, with the grinding oppressions, both civil and religious, have kept down the increase of population in the Old World. Everything is tending to concentrate upon the territory of this land an immense population. There are some millions of foreigners, and they arrive at the rate of several hundred thousand a year. And what a mighty influence is to be exerted by this great nation upon the world! Its influence is already felt to the four quarters of the globe. But, what is to be the character of this influence for ages to come, when we have been gathered home to our Fathers? This must depend, under God, upon the course which is pursued by the present generation of evangelical christians in this happy land. If this vast population is permitted to grow up destitute of the cheering influences of the gospel, or with an inadequate supply, so that it fails to come thoroughly under christian influences, who can foretell the result? This nation, to use the language of another, "will be a tiger unchained. But if the churches do their duty, and give the gospel to this young giant, before it is of full age, it will give the gospel to the whole world."

We can exert a mighty influence (by means of missions), either for good or evil. Our present action, or apathy, will tell upon the weal or woe of this nation of ours. And it does not require prophetic ken to tell that, if the fear of God and his claims are cast off, and disregarded, if the present

tendency towards irreligion be not prevented by the diffusion of religious principles, the wreck of our civil and religious liberties is inevitable. In the present state of society, they must perish together. Then will ages of darkness ensue, more appalling by far than aught which this world in the gloomiest periods of her history has yet recorded. What form of misery will then brood over this happy land, I pretend not to see. Who can tell whether the Temples now dedicated to God, will not then, as in the days anterior to the Reformation in the 16th century, become the result of muttering monks, or of infidel bacchanalians ? I know not whether our children will worship a saint, or pray to a relic, or; like infidel France, deny the existence of a God, and proclaim that death is an eternal sleep. I would earnestly pray, and fondly hope that neither of these woes would fill up the cup of our trembling. But rest assured, God has treasured up wrath more terrific than "eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived," to be executed upon that church and people, who knew the day of merciful visitation and opportunity, yet improved it not.

Such then is the field which God has set before us to possess; let us not *turn away from the thoughtful consideration of it.*

We argue this duty again. II. *In view of the general and obligatory nature of the Savior's command.* By far the greater portion of the earth is at present enveloped in heathenish darkness and superstition. When we look over the map of the world, and compare that portion of its surface which is enlightened by the revelations of heaven, with that which is still in nature's darkness, we find a great and striking contrast between their relative sizes. And even that portion which is considered as christianized, is in many places but poorly supplied with means of grace, and in many not at all. And though upwards of eighteen hundred years have rolled away, since the command was given by the Savior, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;"

yet still much remains to be done, and there is much land to be possessed, in order to its fulfillment.

Nearly sixty generations of men, numbering *forty thousand millions*, have lived and died since the Lord Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. More than *three-fifths* of the race of man are Idolaters, though we are near the termination of the *nineteenth* century of the christian era.

There are now *one thousand millions* on the earth, of whom 630 millions are Idolaters, 100 millions are Mohamedans, 6 millions are Jews, 264 millions are nominal christians. A few millions more than *one-fourth* have nominally recognized Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind. Of these, 130 millions are members of the Romish church, 56 millions of the Greek church, 8 millions are Armenians, 70 millions are nominally Protestant. There are then 194 millions bearing the christian name, to whom the Bible is a sealed book; and only *one-fourth* of the population of the globe, who are permitted to read it, and are favorable to its circulation. Of these, not more than forty millions who are professors of any kind of Christianity, *one-sixth* of nominal christians—*one twenty-fifth* of the population of the world. Of these, not more than 25 millions, *one-tenth* of nominal christians, one fortieth of the entire population are the evangelical followers of Christ. Therefore, we have reason to believe that, at this very hour, *thirty-nine-fortieths* of mankind possess unregenerate hearts.

In this condition do we find the world after it has passed through the revolutions of upwards of six thousand years. How is this sad state of things to be remedied? By the churches obeying the command of her great Head, who says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And upon whom is this injunction obligatory? It was first given to the Apostles, and as the nature of the command clearly shows, that it was not enjoined alone upon the men of one age, but upon all men of all ages, and every

nation: it therefore comes in the full power of a command to all who succeed the Apostles in the church.

But here the question arises: Are all to become *preachers* of the Gospel, or Missionaries of the Cross, to carry out the spirit of the command? Not literally!—But in one sense every christian is so to be. In reference to this, *Luther* says, "All christians belong to the spiritual state, and there is no difference between them, than that of the functions they discharge." Whatever therefore relates to the interests of Christ's Kingdom, is the business of the church, and until the gospel is preached to every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue, on the face of the whole earth, the church will not be fully represented.

One point of inquiry is of the utmost importance here; it is this: Are these the words of the Lord? If so, the question then arises: Are they as applicable to christians, and to christian ministers now, as they were in the days of the Apostles? And here we observe, the words are of general import, and of universal obligation; and since the principles of the Divine Government are ever the same, and since the *Bible* correctly develops these principles, whatever the Bible declares concerning any general duty in one age, is true of the same duty, under similar circumstances, in all ages.—To determine whether we are obligated to aid in spreading the Gospel over the earth, we have only to ascertain whether the command is substantially the same to us as to them.

It is the command of the Savior that the Gospel should be preached to all. Go ye therefore, and teach" (make disciples or christians, by teaching,) "all nations." For "the field is the World." This binds to the discharge of this duty the whole christian church, and consequently us. It is as clear as the noon-day sun. For this reason the promise annexed: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," could not possibly refer to the Apostles exclusively, for they lived not till the end of the world. If then the promise extends to the whole church, so does the command in like manner. And here, on this universal command, we

plant ourselves, and argue our duty in the work of Home Missions, for "*the commands of the Lord are right.*"

We argue our duty as a Church to engage in this work. III. *From the peculiar and pressing nature of the demands made upon us.* The present has been called, by way of distinction, the age of benevolence. Compared with primitive times, and with primitive christians, we have but a feeble claim to that distinctive appellation. The benevolence of the Apostolic age, when "as many as were possessed of lands, or houses, sold them and brought the price of the things sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need," is familiar to every reader of the New Testament Scriptures.—In the succeeding age the custom was for every one to bring his voluntary contributions to the Lord's Treasury. No strong, or heart-stirring appeals were then necessary, in order to reach the hidden sources of their sympathies. No cold calculations of worldly prudence regulated the distribution of their public alms. No fears of a doubtful propriety suggested delay. Whenever, and wherever the call was made, the hand of benevolence had answered the call, almost before the heart had time to express sympathy. We do not think the church feels too much interest in the subject of Foreign Missions; on the contrary we are strongly impressed with the belief that she has not even begun to feel as she should, and to put forth that intense feeling and corresponding effort, which the present state of the world, and the Providence of God imperiously demand. Yet there is a great want of attention on our part to the destitution and importance of the Home Missionary field among us.

There is a great error in the church in regard to the peculiar nature of the demands made upon us, by supposing that too much is required and asked of us for this specific object. Know you not, that religion provides her own means, furnishes her own resources, and asks nothing but what she brings, and has a just right to expect? True it costs something to sustain missions, and missionaries; but religion supplies the

necessary means. She only makes us her disbursing agents, to distribute the surplus revenue which she provides, and our readiness in the good work is taken as the evidence and measure of our love to her. The blessed Saviour gives us this precept as a counterpoise to our predisposition to covetousness. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth or rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." Then we ask: How are our worldly goods to be used? We answer: They are to be religiously employed in the promotion of God's glory, as the pressing necessities of the Church and her Institutions may require.

These demands arise: (A.) *From a consideration of the Church's numbers and extent.*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church is not, as many have supposed, and even some of her own communion imagined, limited in extent, and few in number. Her numerical strength is scarcely realized even in this country, to say nothing of the *thirty millions* holding her doctrines as contained in the Augsburg Confession of Faith, which is about one half of the entire Protestant world. In truth, this Confession is in-wrought into, and is the basis of, all evangelical confessions. The Lutheran Church embraces within her pale in these United States, a population of perhaps more than one and a half millions. This single fact affords a strong argument for greater diligence than heretofore in the work of Home Missions. The present character and condition of the Lutheran Church forces upon us a question of vast practical importance, for our prayerful consideration.—It is this: How shall she be fitted for the great work which, at a time like the present, considering her numbers and extent, very naturally and justly devolves upon her. It is abundantly evident that God has opened a wide and effectual door, and is hastening his work, and now every member of

his body, and every portion of our beloved church, is required to do their whole duty, their own peculiar work.

And disloyal indeed would be this eldest sister in the great Protestant family; a church so honorable in its origin and name, in its distinctive features, its primitive spirit, graced with so many pleasing reminiscences in the past; so well fitted in its constitution and character to act an efficient part in the great work of evangelization, should she withhold herself from the service of her head and King at such a time as the present. And will she do it? Verily, we are persuaded she will not! Her past history affords us ample security that she will not be recreant to her trust. When we consider the more than a *million* of members connected with us, who are dependent upon us, and who look to us justly for the bread of life, whilst this number is greatly enhanced by the immense emigration, and the natural increase of the church; how great are the inducements for us to go forward in this work? The population of the great West, it is said, increases at the ratio of three hundred and fifty thousand a year; it has in many instances exceeded this. At a moderate calculation one-fifth of this increase are Lutheran. These, the members of our churches, are found in the East and West, the North and South, dispersed over every State in the Union; speaking four or five different languages. How urgent then in this point of view is our duty actively to engage in the work of Home Missions; and what can compensate for willful neglect of duty on our part in this particular.

We urge this duty in view of (B.) *Her increase by emigration and otherwise.*

The increase of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in this country by emigration and otherwise, at the present time, does not fall short of sixty thousand a year. And by way of illustrating it, we will look at facts. It has been calculated that from the years 1815 to 1830, a period of fifteen years, 12,000 Germans yearly arrived in the United States. From the year 1830 to 1845, there arrived yearly 40,000. In the year 1846, 100,000. In 1847, 250,000. In 1848,

300,000. In the harbor of New York alone, according to the report of the German Society, there arrived in 1844 above 17,000. In 1845, above 30,000. In 1846, above 52,000. In 1847, 70,735. In 1848, 52,000. In the month of April, 1849, there arrived at New York, 36,068 emigrants. In the month of May, 1850, 45,648. In a single day, there has landed at the port of New York, 17,000. These are widely dispersed throughout the length and breadth of our country. Calculating nearly an equal portion for Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans and Texas, it would be reasonable to suppose that near 200,000 Germans land upon our shores during the year. The German population of New York city is estimated at from fifty to seventy thousand. Philadelphia and Baltimore thirty thousand ; Cincinnati the same. It is thought there are from fifty to sixty thousand Germans in Texas, and thousands are emigrating annually. Many of these are Lutheran by birth and education. I have seen an estimate, making the German population in the United States between four and five millions. Add to these the thousands of Swedes, Norwegians, Hungarians, Danes and Fins, in Wisconsin, Illinois and elsewhere in our land, and the aggregate number is greatly increased. Many of these are Lutherans by birth and education, and could be more easily gathered by missionaries of their own faith and church, and with less cost than by others. The annual addition to our number by emigration and otherwise will probably not fall far short, as we have said, of sixty or seventy thousand a year.

In view then of this great increase, I ask, What is our duty? Clearly to sustain the missionary operations of the church. This German and other population of our land, must be reached by missionaries of the same church and faith. They have a right to look to us for aid, and God requires this work at our hands. Instead of the limited number of congregations, compared with this population, which we are at present aiding, and we are doing much more than at any former period of our history, we ought to aid scores. Instead

of the few churches we are now organizing and building, we ought to organize as many hundreds. And herein we might justly argue a deeper interest, and more enlarged liberality relative to the Church Extension Society, which is so limited in the sphere of its benevolent operations, for lack of needful funds. Duty and interest, which are here inseparable, again urge to renewed activity.

Our Home Missions must therefore be sustained; but not as heretofore. It should be on a vastly enlarged scale. Otherwise, the general interests of religion must materially suffer. Our own welfare as a church must be seriously affected; the immortal souls of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow men must be lost.

And here the question may arise: Has the church the requisite ability to send the gospel to the destitute? She has ample means, and we believe a willing mind (at least in some degree,) to the work, and all that is needed is to call them into requisition, by showing the church her duty to God and to man.

We argue this duty again, (C.) *In view of her destitution. This destitution consists both of men and money.*

The destitution of the Lutheran church is far greater than that of any other branch of the church in the United States. This is susceptible of clear illustration. There are more than two thousand organized congregations in the Lutheran church in the United States, with more than two hundred thousand communicants; and there are numberless places where congregations might be easily organized, and where the people are entirely destitute. Our number of ministers may be somewhat more than twelve hundred, to supply more than two thousand congregations. Not all of this number are engaged in the active duties of their calling, and have the supervision of charges. This would be of organized congregations several to each pastor, and several hundred members, and a population of several thousand souls. But it is a truth well known that some of our pastors have charge of from five to eight congregations; from six hundred to a

thousand communicants, and a population in proportion. In our different institutions of learning, (and we are surely not deficient in the number of them, though we may be in sustaining and endowing them), the number of students who have the ministry in view, is small when compared with the demand, entirely inadequate to fill the vacancies occasioned by death, and otherwise, by the division of charges, the formation of new ones, and as missionaries of the cross. There may be from thirty to forty missionaries in the Home field; about one to every fifty or sixty congregations in the church. There is perhaps not more than one student for the ministry to every ten congregations. It is thought that there are nearly two hundred vacant churches in the different Synods, and there are probably ten times that number of places where we ought to organize congregations. Even in our oldest and best supplied Synodical bounds, there are many vacancies, and a number of charges anxious and ready for division, and many places truly inviting, where charges could easily be formed. Whole counties within the bounds of almost every Synod, with one fourth of their entire population German, or of German extraction, and most of these Lutheran in faith, and only one or two, have sometimes not even this number of ministers. And the deficiency of means is in like proportion. Taking a cursory glance at the amount contributed annually by the different Synods, this truth will be clearly manifest: that in means as well as in men we are sadly deficient. A single glance at the spiritual condition and destitution of our beloved Zion in this country, is sufficient to convince the most credulous that whilst the harvest is truly plenteous, the laborers are few. Everywhere the field stretches out invitingly before our view. The present population of these United States is upwards of 26 millions, and yet there are less than three millions of enrolled members in all the evangelical churches. It is also estimated that there are not less than four thousand vacant churches in our country, besides hundreds that might be organized; and

that six thousand ministers are needed to supply the present destitution.

It might be safely asserted that within our bounds are found by far the largest number of vacant churches. Our materials unorganized as yet, by far exceed all others; and our deficiency in ministers double. We need as many more as we have at present in the ministry to supply our destitution. It is true, within the last fifteen or twenty years, the Lutheran church has spread rapidly. She has planted her standard on the soil of nearly every State in this wide Union. But our increase of ministers has by no means kept pace with the multiplication of churches, and even at this day, the spiritual condition of our people and the supply to the destitute of pastors is more deplorable, than when the learned, pious and laborious Muhlenberg landed on our shores more than a century ago.

These wants must be met, these destitute places must be supplied with the stated preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments of the church. These waste places of our Zion must be built up, and the cup of salvation offered to the tens of thousands of European emigrants who are annually pouring into our country.

Such then is an imperfect representation of our great destitution in men and means. And if the borders of our beloved Zion are to be enlarged, if this crying destitution is to be supplied, and the kingdom of Christ come in the earth, for which we are bound solemnly to labor and pray, it must be by means of these Gospel Institutions being brought in contact with the minds of the people; and this must be done by ministers and missionaries of the Cross; by such co-laborers with God. It is probable that about one half of the entire Lutheran population of this land, are destitute of the regular ministry, and means of grace. Some of these listen to the teachings of fatal errorists; hence the obvious necessity of some more efficient system of efforts, that will convey the Gospel to the homes of the people. And what is better adapted to this end, than the system of Home Mis-

sions, rightly sustained and prosecuted? The time has arrived for the Lutheran church to arouse herself from her inactivity, and gird on her armor, and go forth in the contest, doing battle for the Lord of Hosts. And here I would observe, if we are not favored with the opportunity of going ourselves to preach the everlasting gospel to our destitute brethren, yet we can supply the requisite means for those who do go. Give us but the means, and we will soon furnish, and send out the men, to gladden the moral wastes of our Zion! This is what we ask of the church. And are these demands resting upon us? They are! These are our brethren, children of the same faith, believing in the same Augsburg Confession; followers of the great Reformer *Luther*, bound together with us by the most tender ties, doctrinally and ecclesiastically. These our brethren are in a destitute condition, so far as relates to the living minister, and the means of grace; hence, comes the Macedonian cry, "come over and help us, send, oh send us the Word of Life." To us the Great West, with her spirit of enterprise and activity, and her teeming thousands so destitute of men and means, stretches out her hands imploringly! The prayer is wafted hither by every breeze from her teeming thousands, speaking our mother tongue, allied to us by the ties of brotherhood, to come to their rescue, to send by and through whom we will! And shall we, brethren, can we, sit still till others, who have not the same motives or ties, and who cannot realize the same degree of success, come in, as they are already doing, and seek to perform the work legitimately *our's?* Verily, I hear you say, as the voice of one man, *No!* we will arise and build? Up then! and let us be doing, let us wipe out our former reproach, and show to the world, that we are not unworthy the name, the distinguishing features we bear as *Lutherans.* Let us quit us like men—and the Lord will bless the work of our hands, and will establish it. The work of sending forth the gospel and the living minister to the destitute and perishing, is not limited to any particular branch of the Christian Church, but it is the duty of all, and

all should feel and discharge it. But it may, owing to circumstances, be more particularly the duty of some churches more than others, as it is with reference to individuals. And our highest interest as a church is, to give timely heed to duty, and work while it is called to-day. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

We argue our duty in the work of Home Msssions:

IV. *From the consideration of the success hitherto attending these efforts.*

God has set the seal of His Divine approbation on the Home Missionary enterprise. The Lutheran church is emphatically a church of missions, as she is of literature and theology. Is not Germany truthfully termed the great *storehouse* of learning; the land of able scholars and profound divines? Much of the literature and theology, so greatly boasted of in this land, and the world, is of Germanic origin in English dress. The founder of the Lutheran church was a missionary; its members are missionaries. No missions have ever been more successful; no missionaries more efficient than her's. Look, for example, at the Swedish and Danish missions in Lapland and Greenland, and in the East and West Indies. And who has exhibited more apostolic zeal than a Schwartz, an Egede, a Rhenius, Gutslaff and such like? Hence it is that, for years past, the Church of England and various other missionary societies have sought and derived so large a portion of their most effective missionaries from our German Lutheran churches and ministry.

The first Missionary sent out after the Reformation was by the Lutheran Church. It is not known as it ought to be, neither do we believe the great mass of our people duly consider, how deeply the world is interested in the disposition and course of the Lutheran Church, with regard to the religious enterprises of the present day, and especially missions. By far the largest branch of the Protestant church on the globe, she occupies not only the most responsible, but emphatically the most commanding and influential on the wide field of christian enterprise and benevolence. And if only

the mantle of her illustrious progenitor has fallen upon her, if his spirit still lives, and finds a resting place in the bosom of her sons and daughters, we may calculate, at no distant day, to see her occupying the place, and filling the sphere among the churches, which her illustrious founder, the noble Luther, did among the Reformers of the 16th century. Then will she be regarded by men in her true light, and willful ignorance and misrepresentation of her true history, and her real doctrines, as well as the world's indebtedness to her, under God, be justly apprehended and conceded.

These reflections may be regarded by some as extravagant—as mere sounding words—but let the missionary spirit of the Reformation, which we believe still lives, actuate her, let it kindle anew her sleeping energies, let it control her million of members, let a proper missionary spirit and enterprise infuse itself into her Literary Institutions—her Schools of the Prophets—her Synod's—and a new *era* will dawn upon our beloved church, and the world; far more wide-spread in its practical bearing, and glorious in its results than that of the Reformation. Then shall the "wilderness and the solitary place be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."—Isa. 35 : 1. When a congregation has received aid from the Missionary Society, until its own resources multiply, it becomes itself a benefactor of others, and this the whole history of missions has shown. It turns off to the more needy the supply it has received, and swells that supply by contributions of its own. Instead of hanging upon the sustaining arm of others, it reaches out itself an arm of strength, on which the weak may lean. Thus by the reflex influence of missions, there is a new growth of benevolent action. And this is in consonance with the word of God. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." "He that watereth others shall be watered himself." There is no cause of benevolence in which our contributions given, effects a larger amount of good, than the Domestic Missionary enterprise; there is none that will sooner repay us. For in the course of a few years, the churches thus formed become

most efficient co-workers with us in this good cause, and aid us in raising means to sustain others who are in a destitute condition.

Gratitude, as well as policy, demands that as a church we we should be liberal in sustaining Home Missions. Lutheranism in America is the ressult of Missionary enterprise and benevolence. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was a Missionary, sent hither from Germany. So were some of his predecessors and successors, as Bolzious, Gronow, Kuntze, Schwartz, Helmuth, Kurtz, &c. These men were the founders of the churches at Ebenezer, in Georgia, New York, Philadelphia, the Trappe and other places. So it is in regard to many of our churches of a more recent date.

We may justly aver that no church in this land has more scattered and unsupplied materials than the Lutheran, none loses so many members by neglect, or an inefficient supply, none would gain more by prosecuting this work with the energy and efficiency proportionate to our ability. Contemplate the little that has been expended in the way of Home Missions during the past, and how beneficial the result. The first English Lutheran Church of Pittsburg, Pa., only of some eighteen years existence, was aided a few years by a few hundred dollars from the Missionary treasury, and now well sustains itself—nay more. They have a tasteful church edifice, comparing favorably with those around it, and an enlightened and liberal congregation. It has aided in the formation of two German and two English Churches which are supplied with pastors. It has taken the initiatory steps for the organization of others, so that several ministers good and true now labor successfully, where a few years ago there were none. It has under its care four or five Sabbath Schools, with several hundred children. There is also an Infirmary and Deaconess Institute, the result of the active efforts and faith of its former worthy pastor, the present Editor of that admirable church paper, the "Missionary," and "Director of the Institute." This work of mercy and benevolence was effected at the cost of thousands of dollars, and sustains

annually a large number of patients. In addition to these, there is an Orphan Home at Zelienople, with its buildings, its farm, and school—to meet a want so much felt in our church in this land. And it contributes its hundreds to the cause of benevolence and the Church. During the last Synodical year from May 1858, to May 1859, more than seven thousand five hundred dollars (7,500,) were raised in this church to support the various institutions of the Gospel, and to carry on the various missions, and other parts of the work of christian benevolence. Behold what God hath wrought! It is marvellous in our eyes!

The same in a certain sense may be said of Luther Chapel in Baltimore city, and of Cincinnati. In Washington city you behold the same result of missionary effort. The Weverton Mission is now a self austaining pastorate. The congregations at present composing the Indiana, Johnstown, Blairsville and Schmicksburg charges, in Pennsylvania, are originally the result of missionary effort and enterprise. The talented, devoted, and lamented N. G. Sharretts, who was cut off in the midst of his days, and usefulness, whose memory and labor of love are sweetly embalmed in the hearts of all who knew him; and who now sleeps in hope of a glorious resurrection, in front of one of the churches reared by his zeal to the honor of God; was a Missionary sent out under the auspices of the West Pennsylvania Synod. So was his predecessor, the venerable F. W. Heyer, who devoted the remaining energies of a useful and well spent life for some years in Southern India, and who now labors with such Apostolic zeal the few remaining days allotted him as a missionary in Minnesota; as also his successor in a part of the charge (Rev. Babb,) were also missionaries sent out by the same Synod. These churches, now some fourteen or sixteen in number, not only sustain themselves and their six or seven pastors, but aid liberally in sending the living minister and the word of life to other destitute portions of our Zion. The same might be said, though in a more extended sense, relative to the missionary labors of father Stouch—who, like a ripe

shock of corn, was gathered a few years ago to the garner of the Lord. That *aged* pioneer of the church, who was in so great peril ofttimes by water and by land; and whose commission, as he ofttimes jocosely remarked in the hearing of the writer, instructed him "to explore the counties of Westmoreland and Somerset, Pa., and all the region beyond;" and who was so successful not only in spying out, but possessing the land. There are many other examples of like character to those already alluded to, to which we could refer in proof of this general proposition, but let these suffice. Truly we may well say: *What has God wrought!* "It is marvellous in our eyes." How beautifully does it verify that Scripture, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good." (Eccl. 11: 6.) The success that has attended the Home Missionary Enterprise in the past, is not only an evidence of God's approbation upon it, but a sure deduction, a certain indication that future efforts will be crowned with success. All that is required is for the church to bring the tithes into God's store-house, and herewith prove him, and see if he will not pour us out a blessing until there shall not be room to receive it. The little that has been done, has been recompensed an hundred fold. See what has been already accomplished with limited means. The Home Missionary Society of the Lutheran Church was organized at a meeting of the General Synod in Philadelphia, in May, 1845—a period of fourteen years has elapsed. It began, (says its Corresponding Secretary) its operations with vigor, and the Committee to whom its practical affairs have been particularly entrusted, have endeavored to carry them on in the same spirit. We have cheered many a poor missionary in his arduous, and too frequently unappreciated labor. We have supplied many a vacant church with the regular preaching of the gospel. We have founded many new pastorates, erected not a few houses of worship, established a considerable num-

ber of Sabbath Schools, and promoted the circulation of the Scriptures, tracts, our own church papers, and other publications. We have saved some congregations from dispersion, and have "strengthened the things that remain, which were ready to die." We have extended our name and principles into sections of the western country, where neither was previously known. We have brought out some young men who are now preparing for the ministry. We have added a goodly number of persons to the church, and have brought the waters of baptism to a crowd of those of whom Christ has said, "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." Our aid has been extended to every church that applied for it in a constitutional way, and there is a multitude of souls this day, that bless God for the establishment of the Missionary Society.

Since its formation, in 1845, the Home Missionary Society has aided 237 ministers in different parts of our country. And the following statistics drawn from their reports will show the success that has attended their labors. Infants baptized during the last six years 2,822; Adults 204; Confirmed 1,158; received by certificate, or profession, 1,309. They have established several hundred Sabbath Schools, with thousands of scholars; Congregations organized 173; Churches built 98; the contributions to Missions during this period will amount to, at least, $1,000 from these Mission Churches; whilst in pastoral labor and family visitation, and untiring exertion for the salvation of souls, much might be truthfully said in its favor.

Now if it has done so much with but limited means in the past, what may we not expect it to effect if liberally sustained in the future. So that we can see at a glance the imperative necessity of more liberal contributions. The demands upon this society are constantly increasing as the church enlarges. Surely there is much land to be possessed. Shall we not go up and possess it? Verily, I hear you say as the voice of one man, "We will go up and possess the land." "We will arise and build up the waste places of our Zion." Up, then, and let

us be doing! Let us show our faith by our works. Let us labor to make Zion a praise in the whole earth.

God has assigned a great and a glorious work to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in this land. A proportionate part of this devolves upon us—upon each individual church, upon every member in the same. None can so effectually perform it as we can. This truth has been amply demonstrated in the efforts put forth by the various churches, and the success attendant; in order to operate upon the German community of our country. To accomplish this, the Domestic Missionary Society, is, we verily believe, the great leading instrumentality. And it is clearly our duty, and the duty of the whole church, to come up to the aid of this Society, to furnish men, and to provide means to afford it the requisite facilities for performing its appropriate work. Should we not then "go up and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it." If we do not subdue it, and make it Immanuel's happy land; if it be not given to Christ for his inheritance, and as His possession, errorists and fanatics of all kinds will enter in and possess it, and give it over to the Prince of darkness, the evil spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. But the motives inciting us to greater activity are so numerous and powerful—so obvious to every unbiased mind, that it is only necessary to glance at them. Even regarded as a political expedient, and viewed only in its relations to the rights of person and property, the due administration of justice, on which the happiness of mankind depends, the eye of political wisdom would regard it as expedient and indispensable to the proper organization of society, that Home Missions be well sustained, and especially as they clearly indicate success. In a civil and patriotic sense we may well urge its claims. The family is the nursery of the State. Wherever you find them under the influence of christian principles, and well governed, there is a good and virtuous community. Here is the proper place to inculcate right notions of country, of justice, honesty, honor, industry, morality and piety. Would you save your country. this hap-

py favored land from anarchy, misrule, lawlessness, from deformed vice in every shape; would you bequeath to your children, and to after ages this fair inheritance of our birthright pure and untainted? Would you save it from the snares and intrigues of Foreign Jesuistical control, from the blighting mildew of Infidelity, and the withering scourge of Agrarianism, Fourierism, Radicalism, Red Republicanism, and High Churchism, and all things of a like character, which scorch and blasts, as the fatal *Simoom* of the desert, all that is good in governments and in morals? Then encourage, aid and pray for Inner or Home Missions. This is the most effectual antidote for those pernicious views entertained and promulgated by the many now in this country, and *who have sought this land as their home.* But this duty arises in view of the fact that is is *Politic.*

The poorest acre of New England, or of the Middle States, is far more valuable for purposes of permanent occupancy, than the rich land of Turkey.—And why? Because, in the one you are protected in your rights by a healthy sentiment in the body politic; while in the other you are exposed to lawless rapacity, and have no security for life, liberty or right. This is all owing to religion, to the Bible. It restrains vice also—the vice of Intemperance, profligacy and gambling. It saves in jails, and prisons, and courts of justice. If you would desire to locate, to seek a home for yourself and family permanently; in what kind of a community, and among what kind of people would you seek it? Would it be where there is no respect paid to law, order and morality, where there is no security for life and property, where there are no schools, no churches, no Sabbaths? *Surely not!* But where you find these—and the Bible, the Pulpit and the minister or missionary—where law and order reign. Every dollar that is spent in this way, is returned to us fourfold. Let Infidels and modern opposers of missions ponder well this historic fact. If we do not possess it, others will, and we shall have no part, or lot, or memorial therein. Duty calls, let us up and be doing "whilst it is called to day."

But we have been regarding the value of missions, in their success, merely as a matter of worldly expediency; and in its relation to time, its moral bearings and eternal importance, no human tongue can tell, no imagination conceive, no language, however eloquent, can adequately convey. O! it is the salvation of the soul, for which Jesus bled and died. That soul which must live forever in happiness or woe. It is to rob perdition of its prey—and people the glorious mansions of bliss.

List thee, fellow Christian! it is the wail of our brother's woe, the imploring call of the needy and perishing. See the field already white to the harvest—the land to be possessed; the many perishing for lack of *vision.* God has made the din of their urgent appeal to us for the living minister, and the word of life, to be ever sounding in our ears, and the sighs and groans of a ruined world to be wafted to us by the winds of heaven, in order that the benevolent feelings of our souls may be drawn forth in acts of good which will make us more resemble Him who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich."

And we have no time to procrastinate; now is the day, now the auspicious hour! We can all aid in this good work, we can assist to push forward the mighty interests of the Home Missionary Society. Can we refuse our aid? If so: *we are utterly unworthy the name we bear.*

We argue this duty:

V. *Because—the greater the demands, the more imperative the obligation.*

Every cause may be said to be important whose end is to glorify God. But they differ in the degree of their importance. We as a church have a work assigned us. Our duty evidently is to ascertain what it is, and then engage in it, with energy proportionate to its demands; and not spend our strength in doing the work of others. We can at once see, from what we have already advanced, that the Lutheran church has not supplied her own members with the preached word, and hence her first duty is to do so. Important as

is the Foreign Missionary field; the Bible and Tract Societies, and other causes of Christian benevolence; still we are firmly persuaded that from our peculiar situation as a church in this country, we are not called to sustain these in the same degree, and to the same extent of liberality as the Home Missionary and Education causes. True, we should, if we have the ability, do something for them all, but not in equal proportion. Our own dintinctive wants should be first met—and the demands upon us supplied, in giving the Gospel and Church Institutions to our own suffering thousands. This is first in importance. "We must do good unto all men, but especially to them who are of the household of faith."

The cause of Home Missions is the most important, save that of Education, that claims our attention as a church. There are thousands of our destitute Lutheran brethren, scattered throughout the whole land, and this number is daily augmenting. We have not, in the past, employed adequate efforts to remedy this great destitution. Others have entered in, with zeal and energy, to take the work out of our hands, and their efforts are not always characterized by that fairness, and christian courtesy which we have a right to expect. Our field of Domestic Missionary operations is far more inviting, and promises a richer reward for the money and labor expended, than any other. This is owing to language and denominational predilections. The materials on which we might more successfully operate, and which Lutheran Missionaries might, with comparative ease, collect and organize into churches, are almost numberless. All, therefore, that is wanting is *men*, and means. Men to send out—and money to support them.

To contribute liberally and regularly of the substance with which the Lord has blessed us, for the great purpose of spreading the Gospel, is so clearly the duty, and the privilege of every Christian, that it is a matter of painful regret to find any who profess to be zealous for the cause of Christ, giving so rarely and sparingly to its support.

There is much practical reflection in the declaration of the

Apostle, when he asks: "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" The fact of our pressing demands should startle every one of us. The thousands perishing for lack of knowledge should open our hearts and hands. Is this state of destitution so great of necessity? Verily, no! The means are adequate to the end proposed? When the word is faithfully preached it is "mighty to the pulling down of strong holds. It will accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the things whereunto he sendeth it."

Who of us have gone forward in this work of God and the Church? Who has done his, or her, duty? Who has responded to the urgent calls made upon us? And shall we not answer to the pressing demands made upon us; shall we not come up nobly to our duty in this particular? Do I hear the question propounded: Who ought to give? I answer: The duty of contributing to domestic Missions is incumbent upon all, upon the poor as well as the rich. Under the ancient economy, none were allowed to come before the Lord empty, but each one was required to give according to his ability. The same rule obtains under the new teaching of the Savior, from the recognizing of a cup of cold water, and from his commendation of the poor widow who had cast in two mites into the treasury of the Lord. Our benevolence should be of an intelligent character; it therefore requires that we should be informed and reflect as to the claims calling it forth. This will enable us to see what we should give, otherwise we are liable to give too little or to give without a due regard to the relative importance and necessity of the object. And here the membership of the Church has something yet to learn, before duty will be faithfully, systematically and consistently performed.

But you may ask, How much shall we give? We answer —This you alone must determine, in view of the light possessed, and in full consciousness of your responsibility to God, the great Master of the Vineyard, ever remembering that the greater and more pressing the demands, the greater the

responsibility; and to our own Master, in view of our faithfulness or our slothfulness, we stand or fall. If you are wont to regard your worldly substance as not your own, but as simply held in trust, as a steward, for the glory of your Maker and the extension of his kingdom—then are you bound to appropriate your Lord's goods, so as to honor his claims upon you. Under the Mosaic dispensation more than one-fourth, perhaps one-half of their increase was devoted by the people of God, to public and religious purposes. And surely the new dispensation is not less noble in its spirit, while it is far more extended in its work and wants, having it in charge to give the gospel to all mankind.

As members of the Lutheran church, we have much to do in this work, yet many excuse themselves by imagining that they have sufficient to do to support the gospel in their own midst. But do such duly consider? Had our forefathers been governed by such a narrow, selfish and restrictive policy, what would have been our spiritual condition to-day? Perhaps we would have been but little elevated in the scale of intellectual and moral well being above the heathen, the benighted Pagan nations of the earth, who worship stocks and stones, the workmanship of men's hands. Do we feel that we are God's stewards? Have we cast as much as we should into the Lord's Treasury. If not, let us do so now! Then will we soon have ministers to supply our destitute places, both at home and abroad.

I would now close these reflections by asking, in conclusion: *What, in view of this subject, is our duty, and the duty of the Church?* It manifestly is our duty,

1st. *To give more liberally.* There are those who offer themselves to act in the character of Home Missionaries. They are men of God, good and true, giving full proof of their ministry; who say, here am I, send me. But they have not of themselves the means requisite to sustain them. What then is the duty of the church in regard to them? Clearly to send them. And how send them?—By furnishing the requisite means. And have we the requisite ability so to do?

Who can question it? True, more men are needed than we have, yet we require means to sustain what we have. Now to accomplish what is required we must give more *liberally*. At the present hour, ministers and means are needed to supply the pressing destitution. And must more thrilling accounts of woes than we have already heard, be sounded in our ears, and that of the church, to rouse to action her dormant energies? Must there be an endurance of greater loss and suffering to our bleeding *Zion*, or on the part of our self-denying laborers in the field to enlist the sympathies, the prayers, the abilities of those who are God's stewards? Is it true that the spirit of worldliness and gain has so possessed the children of light, as to render them recreant to their sacramental vows? We can only expect God's blessing in connection with our best efforts. Is not that piety defective which is content to employ its greatest efforts of strength to maintain a feeble and uncertain life in the Old Seats, and give the variable and accidental surplus to the cause of the perishing and the dying. Cost what it may to meet the calls of duty, the church should ever know that it costs more to neglect them.

Think you that God has allotted to the Lutheran church in America, a work which she is unable to accomplish? By no means. Our obligation is precisely commensurate with our ability, employing the term ability to include talents, opportunities and means. Let me again ask: Have we done what we could to supply our destitute population with the means of grace? Or must we yield to the work of others? Have the different Synods done what they could? Have we, her ministers, and you, her members, come up to this work as required of us by the exigency of the present times? Have we given of our gold and silver unto the Lord? When I look at what we have hitherto done; when I behold the comparatively small amount given to the Lord, who gave us all things richly to enjoy, I am ready to take to us shame and confusion of face.

Let me appeal to you, *dear reader*—In the name of our suffering, bleeding, destitute church, whose honored name we bear. In the name of *Luther*, that man of God, who gave himself up wholly to the work of the Lord; who made the powers of his gigantic mind subservient to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, who faced death in a thousand forms to do his Master's work. In the name of Him, whose you are professedly, and whose you ought to be. In the name and for the sake of perishing, dying souls—I call upon you to *give*—to give more liberally—"For the Lord loveth a cheerful giveer." What thou doest, do quickly.

The time is short.—It is manifestly our duty

2d. or Lastly. *To pray fervently.* "The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Hath not Christ said: "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more laborers into his vineyard." What encouragement is herein found to *pray*, to pray fervently and importunately for the success of our missionary efforts. Do you pray for this object? Pray you now! Then may we confidently look for the fulfillment of the promise that "God will establish the work of our hands, and make Zion a praise in the whole earth." Then shall the heathen be given to Christ for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth as his possession." Christian, whether young or old, rich or poor, however engaged or circumstanced in life, exert yourself, by your influence, your prayers, your means, to send forth laborers into the vineyard, for the "Harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few."

And shall we not be active? See what a vast field of missionary effort stretches out before us! How inviting! And shall we not go up and possess it? It is our shame that we have slept so long already; that we have permitted so many favorable opportunities to pass by. Shall we, the first born *daughter* of the glorious Reformation, be indifferent to our work? Who has shorn us of our locks, whither has the glory of our strength, and the power of our might departed? O! for the spirit of true Reform, yea rather of Christ, to en-

ergize our powers, to infuse vigor into us for the performance of duty. Is not the field already white to the harvest? Does not the Macedonian cry come to us now, borne on every breeze from *East* and *West*, from *North* and *South*, to hasten to their rescue? And shall we—

> "Whose souls are lighted
> With wisdom from on high,
> Shall we to men benighted,
> The lamp of life deny?"

It is the wail of our *brothers'* woe, the imploring call of the needy and perishing. And can the East withhold—shall not the North give up, and the South and the West answer in concert, by freely giving men and money to gladden the moral wastes of Zion.

Brethren in Christ: Is there not an appeal to us the most eloquent, and most per-emptory, to renewed and redoubled diligence? And how can we answer it better, or more effectually than by preparing and then sending out holy, zealous, and effective ministers of the word?

Let us shake off supineness. Let us feel, and pray more. Let us give substantial proof of our sincerity, by opening our hands and purses and filling to the full the Missionary Treasury. Let us present with renewed zeal this good cause to all around us. And let us not rest until every waste place throughout the length and breadth of our beloved Zion shall be filled with the ministry of the word and the means of grace. Let us be strong in *faith*, and quit us like men—and how glorious will be the result. Everything that opposes will yield, Alpine difficulties which tower to the very heavens, will vanish. Ethiopia will stretch her hands unto God, and the Isles of the sea learn his most holy Law—Earth's vast moral wastes will become a fruitful field, and the salvation of God extend "from the river to the ends of the earth." Until the glad voice of Zion's watchman shall echo on every hill top, and be heard in every vale. Then will the Apocalyptic Angel, spoken of by the Revelator John, as he flies through heaven bearing the everlasting Gospel, proclaim joy-

fully—"The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our God, and of his Son Jesus Christ—and a ransomed world will respond "*Allelujah, allelujah,* for the *Lord God Omnipotent* reigneth." And let all the people say—*Amen.*